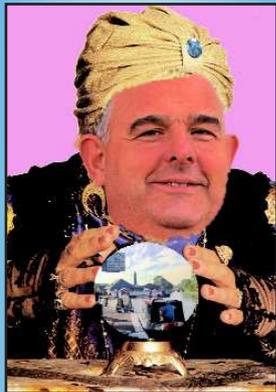


Inside
2017
predicted
by
Petrulengo
Jenkins



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and its
going to
be good



Looking after the Llangollen is winter task

The Llangollen Canal – destination for many boating holidaymakers setting out from Norbury Wharf - is getting a makeover.

Chirk Aqueduct which carries the Llangollen Canal between England and Wales is to get a facelift courtesy of specialist harnessed climbers who will carry out vital maintenance work to remove unwanted vegetation which has taken root in crevices of the Grade II* listed aqueduct.

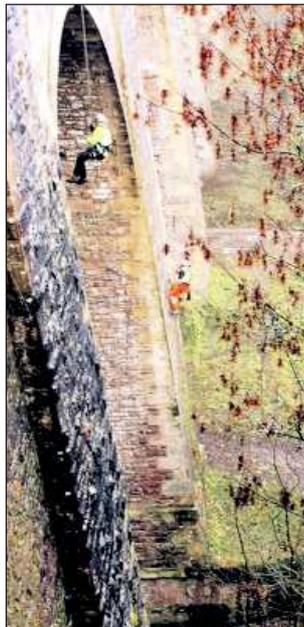
Using trowels and other hand tools, they will dig out ivy, moss, weeds and even young saplings which, if left unchecked, could damage masonry on the impressive 200-year-old structure.

The work is part of a wider Canal & River Trust project to protect heritage structures along the Llangollen and Montgomery canals this winter, including the magnificent Pontcyslite and Chirk aqueducts.

Built by famous canal engineer Thomas Telford between 1796 and 1801, Chirk Aqueduct is a masterpiece of civil engineering. Measuring 70-foot high and 710-foot long the aqueduct carries the Llangollen Canal across the Ceiriog Valley near Chirk, on the England-Wales border, spanning the two countries.

Steve Hinton, contracts supervisor at the Canal & River Trust, said: "This is a rare opportunity to see people abseiling over this breathtaking structure to remove overgrown vegetation which has built up over several years.

And three sets of locks on the



Abseiling cleaners at work on the Chirk Aqueduct and, right, Wyn Evans in Grindley lock chamber

Llangollen Canal have been upgraded and improved, at a cost of £100,000.

In December, locks at Marbury, Quoisley and the three lock staircase at Grindley Brook got a make-over to keep them operational and in good working order for the thousands of boaters who enjoy cruising the popular Llangollen Canal each year.

At Marbury, one of the old composite metal gates has been replaced with a new oak lock gate. At Quoisley, a failed wall below the lock chamber has been restored, reinforcing the canal channel for generations to come.

And at the landmark three lock staircase at Grindley Brook, each lock chamber has been

improved with repairs to the gates, posts and chamber walls, including a new gate at the bottom.

Wynn Evans, Llangollen Canal supervisor with the Canal & River Trust, explained: "The soil in this part of Shropshire is largely peat and at Quoisley the wall below the lock chamber needed serious reinforcement.

"Lock gates only have a working lifespan of two to three decades, so they do need to be replaced at fairly regular intervals. At Marbury the gate had come to the end of its natural life but at Grindley Brook bottom lock one of the gates had been buckled through misuse. Work at this lock is costing over £33,000 so it was an expensive mistake to make."

Happy

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Petrulengo Jenkins is at it again

Back in January Norbury Wharf's very own fortune teller, Petrulengo Jenkins, dug out his crystal ball and the results were astounding.

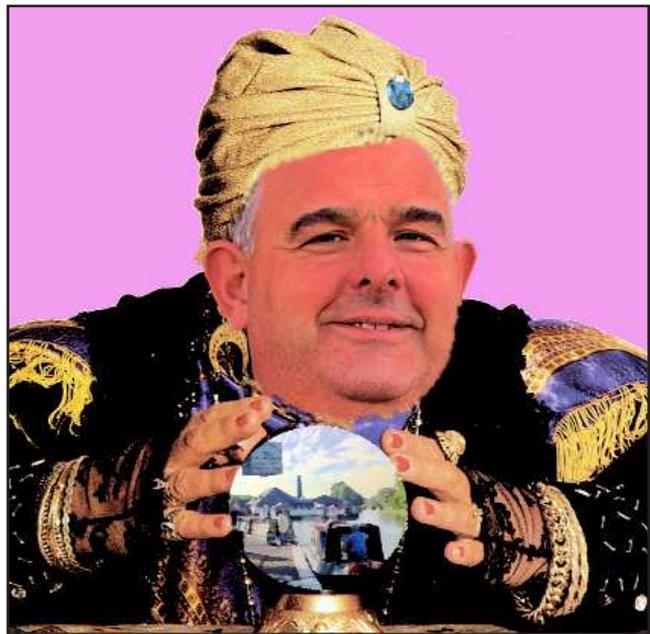
He infallibly predicted: "Frost in January, green leaves in the Spring, sun in the Summer and lovely gold colours in the Autumn here on the Shroppie" One year on and some of his 2016 predictions are taking a little longer to come true but he insists the timing is just a little out and eventually we will all come see how right he was when he said: "I see diesel getting ever-cheaper, everybody getting a pay rise and peace and harmony breaking out between marina based boaters and continuous cruisers," and went on. "And I predict the Canal & River Trust will abandon their fetish about 48-hour moorings and start making money through their charity chuggers."

Petrulengo's alter-ego – Simon Jenkins, managing director of Norbury Wharf on the Shropshire Union Canal – certainly got it right when he was optimistic that there would be more boats and more boaters, with a growth in canal holidays.

Like most prognosticators Simon didn't see Brexit coming but he says it is likely to make 2017 even more popular with families looking for a high-quality break without the worry of what a plunging pound will do to their holiday money. Simon added: "Not only will a canal holiday make sense for UK families but the falling pound is also likely to further boost the number of holiday-makers the canal system attracts from both Europe and America.

"A cheaper pound makes our good value holidays seem like real bargains for foreign visitors who will now get much more for their money."

Simon, who has seen boats selling on the day of arrival at Norbury's brokerage several times in 2016, had already accurately predicted that the

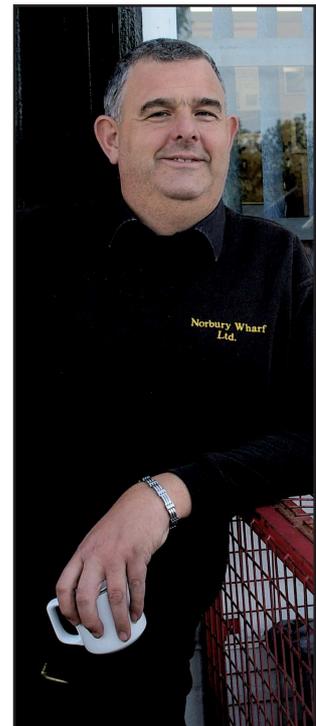


Petrulengo Jenkins and - below - his alter-ego Simon Jenkins, Managing Director of Norbury Wharf

number of boats used as homes would keep growing steadily, with several sold by Norbury heading down to join the London moorings merry-go-round. He said back in January: "I see nothing that will slow down that process as London house prices reach the stratosphere."

Just a few days ago the Canal & River Trust announced that the number of boats on its London waterways* continues to increase, after research for the first time showed just how many people are making their homes on boats in the capital. An explosion in boat numbers in recent years (a 57 per cent increase since 2012) prompted the Trust to carry out its first ever "Who's On London's Boats" survey to build a picture of the capital's boating community in an effort to understand and meet their needs.

The results show that boat living is increasingly seen as a viable alternative lifestyle by many, particularly younger, people and those living alone or as couples.



Peering in his glass ball at 2017

Like many Simon already had a clear picture of London's boaters and the Trust's survey backs him up.

* 769 boaters – 58 per cent of the total respondents – describe their boat as their primary residence, with a further 156 saying the boat is either a second or temporary home.

* 50 per cent have been living on boats on London's waterways for three years or less.

* 50 per cent cite financial reasons as motivation for living on a boat; but an overwhelming 82 per cent are attracted by the waterway environment (boats, wildlife, tranquillity etc).

* 41 per cent of those living on boats are under 35 years old.

* 43 per cent of those living on boats live alone, with 42% living as part of a cohabiting couple.

* 70 per cent own their boats outright.

Trend will continue

Simon Jenkins also expects the liveaboard trend to continue outside the capital and says there is now a need for a better balance between 48-hour moorings and seven or 14 days, which suit those long distance cruisers better.

At the end of 2016 boaters and waterways enthusiasts are awaiting an announcement from the Government about a Canal & River Trust takeover of the Environment Agency navigations, including the Thames and the rivers Nene and Ouse.

Simon is doubtful it will happen in 2017: "There is no property endowment to support those navigations and it will only be practical if a large lump of taxpayers money comes to the Trust and keeps coming. I worry what will happen if Government cash runs out, there isn't even any guarantee of money to keep the existing C&RT network properly funded in future years.

"The Trust does sometimes appear out of touch with the canals, and the announcement of an increase in boat licence fees well above current inflation rates in 2017 does seem to ignore the financial pressures



Boats near Victoria Park in East London - numbers are still growing.

many boaters and boating business are under. "However, I am afraid that may be the shape of things to come with Brexit predicted to force up inflation in the UK and the Trust seemingly unable to bring in sufficient funds from charity donations, even with the current support of government grants. "Boaters are a target that is easy to hit, as are canalside businesses and I am afraid we will be seeing more and more increases as things get more difficult."

He is also concerned about the precedent about to be set in London of charging visiting boats for mooring places.

"In essence this just opens up another income stream from boaters, who pay their licence in order to be able to moor freely anywhere on the system. "If C&RT continue down this road in other mooring 'hot-spots' it will add to the cost of boating holidays and everyday boating and threatens to reverse the growth trend we have enjoyed in the past couple of years. It is a dangerous precedent to set."

On the positive side, Simon is predicting thousands more people will get involved in Norbury

Wharf's monthly giveaways on social media, with prizes ranging from floating fish and chip suppers to boating holidays.

"For us, the giveaways of 2016, initially celebrating my 50th birthday, have been a massive success, bringing us thousands of new friends on social media. That's why we are continuing them next year and we aim to attract thousands more people to the waterways and Norbury Wharf."

At present Simon says he sees the number of boats and boaters growing steadily again this year.

"As I said last year," Simon explained, "the more people that know the canals and come to love them, the more likely they, and businesses like ours that serve them, will continue to thrive."

"The more boaters the merrier, and that means all sorts, from those taking a trip on the Shropshire Star, our trip boat, or on one of our day boats or hire boats, right through to those buying a boat of their own."

"More boats, more people on the cut. It can only be good for our future."

Happy

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Boats for sale

Up the Creek

A 40ft all steel cruiser stern narrow boat built by Hallmark boats in 2000. She is powered by a Vetus diesel marine engine housed under the rear deck boards.

From entering the boat at the rear there is a permanent double bedroom, then comes the shower room with full height shower cubicle, hand wash basin and cassette toilet. The galley has ample cupboards and work tops, sink and drainer, full size cooker, and fridge.

It is followed by the open plan saloon area with solid fuel stove, front doors then lead out on to the front deck which is covered with a cratch and cover.

The boat has a current boat safety certificate until 2020.



Ref 10395

£23,500

Red Jasmine

A lovely 47ft semi traditional stern narrow boat built in 1995. Hull by John White and professionally fitted out by Top Lock Boat Company. Brand new Thornycroft Mitsubishi engine fitted only 1500 hours ago. The boat has had two owners from new and has been regularly docked, blacked and serviced. It has a front cratch and cover and a rear cockpit cover. From the bow, the open plan saloon with a solid fuel stove and back boiler heating radiators and a calorifier, leads to a 'u-shaped' galley with fridge, cooker and hob. The bathroom has a bath with shower over, and cassette toilet. The double fixed bedroom leads to the back deck. It has the feel of a much bigger boat and is ready to go cruising. £27,950 (Offers may be considered)



Ref 10393

Shongalolo

A 42 foot cruiser stern narrowboat, built by W and W engineers in 1987, and powered by a Thornycroft Mitsubishi marine diesel engine which is housed under the rear deck boards. From the rear doors you come first to the twin bedroom. Forward of the beds is a sink unit and storage, then a shower compartment to one side and cassette toilet on the opposite side, with doors that close to give a full width bathroom. The galley has work surfaces on both sides, complete with full sized gas cooker and 12v fridge. Finally comes the large saloon with sofa bed. This boat is heated by radiators from a Webasto diesel heater. £24,950



REF 10396

Slow n Easy

65 foot semi-trad all steel narrow boat built in 2002 by Burton Narrowboats and powered by a Beta Marine 43HP engine with twin alternators and PRM hydraulic operated gearbox. Hot water is via a twin coil calorifier, fed by the engine, gas central heating and a 240V immersion heater. From entering the boat at the rear some steps take you to the rear cabin laid out as two single bunks, that can be made in to a large double bed across the width of the boat. Then comes the shower room and pump out toilet, Forward of this is the double bed, and then comes the galley before a large saloon with L shaped seating and lots of space with bow doors leading to the front deck.

£34,999

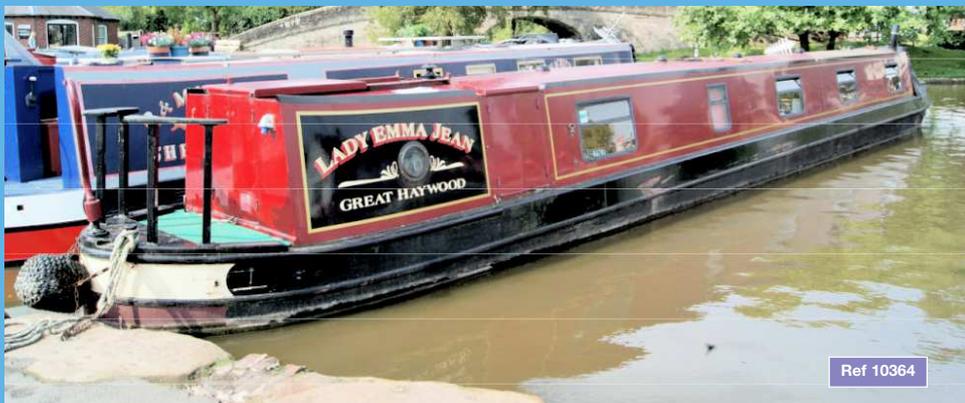


Ref 10381

Lady Emma Jean

A 60 foot Gary Gorton Traditional stern narrow boat built in 1989, and very much updated since then. Through the stern doors you come straight in to the engine compartment, a door then takes you in to bedroom area with two sets of steel opening side doors. There's a large galley, then the open plansaloon which houses a TV cupboard and a large multifuel stove.

Front doors lead out on to the front deck which is covered by a cratch and cover. Powered by a modern Perkins 42 HP water cooled engine.



Ref 10364

£29,999.